

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-8 (Cancelled)

9. (New) A plasmid, comprising a gene encoding a polypeptide having Rep protein activity and comprising an amino acid sequence that is at least 81.91% homologous to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4.

10. (New) The plasmid according to Claim 9, wherein the gene has a size of from 4.4 to 6 kb.

11. (New) The plasmid according to Claim 9, wherein the gene encodes a polypeptide having Rep protein activity and comprises an amino acid sequence that is at least 90% homologous to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4.

12. (New) The plasmid according to Claim 9, wherein the gene encodes a polypeptide having Rep protein activity and comprises an amino acid sequence that is at least 99% homologous to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4.

13. (New) The plasmid according to Claim 9, wherein the gene encodes a polypeptide having Rep protein activity and comprises an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4.

14. (New) The plasmid according to Claim 9, wherein the plasmid is isolated from *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* AJ12308.

15. (New) The plasmid according to Claim 9, wherein the plasmid is isolated from *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* AJ12310.

16. (New) The plasmid according to Claim 9, wherein the plasmid is isolated from *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* AJ12340.

17. (New) The plasmid according to Claim 9, wherein the plasmid is isolated from *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* AJ12309.

18. (New) A method of isolating the plasmid according to Claim 9, comprising culturing the *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* in a culture medium.

19. (New) The method according to Claim 18, further comprising gathering plasmid DNA fractions by a alkali method.

20. (New) The method according to Claim 19, further comprising analyzing the fractions by agarose gel electrophoresis.

21. (New) A method of isolating the plasmid according to Claim 10, comprising culturing the *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* in a culture medium.

22. (New) A method of isolating the plasmid according to Claim 11, comprising culturing the *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* in a culture medium.

23. (New) A method of isolating the plasmid according to Claim 12, comprising culturing the *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* in a culture medium.

24. (New) A method of isolating the plasmid according to Claim 13, comprising culturing the *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* in a culture medium.

25. (New) A method of isolating the plasmid according to Claim 14, comprising culturing the *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* in a culture medium.

26. (New) A method of isolating the plasmid according to Claim 15, comprising culturing the *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* in a culture medium.

27. (New) A method of isolating the plasmid according to Claim 16, comprising culturing the *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* in a culture medium.

28. (New) A method of isolating the plasmid according to Claim 17, comprising culturing the *Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes* in a culture medium.

29. (New) A polynucleotide, comprising a nucleic acid sequence that encodes a polypeptide having Rep protein activity and comprising an amino acid sequence that is at least 81.91% homologous to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4.